

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

December 21, 2001

To: Responsible State Agencies,
Trustee Agencies,
Interested Organizations,
and Members of the Public

From: California Dept. of Fish and Game
8604 La Jolla Shores Drive
La Jolla, CA 92037

Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Documentation for the California Market Squid Fishery Management Plan**

The Fish and Game Commission (Commission) will be the Lead Agency and the Department of Fish and Game (Department) will prepare a CEQA equivalent environmental document for the project identified above. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The draft environmental document is being prepared for the California Market Squid Fishery Management Plan which is to be adopted by the Commission by December 31, 2002. In terms of both volume and revenue, market squid is one of the most important fisheries in the State. The fishery targets spawning squid in shallow sandy bottom areas off coastal California, and is separated at Point Conception into northern and southern fisheries. The northern fishery centers around the Monterey Bay area; the southern fishery takes place at the Channel Islands (Santa Catalina, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and Anacapa islands) and along the coast from Newport Beach to Point Conception. Seining is the most common fishing method, primarily purse (70%) and drum (16%); other methods include lampara, brail, dip and other types of nets. The fishery uses lights up to 30,000 watts in power to aggregate squid. Light boats work cooperatively with seiners by aggregating squid with their lights for the seiner to harvest.

There has been a marked expansion of the California market squid fishery, increasing almost 500% from the 1981-82 season to the 2000-2001 season. La Niña conditions in 1999 led to an extended fishing season for market squid in close proximity to seabird rookeries at Anacapa, Santa Cruz and Prince islands. There is concern that light activity at night from these squid fishing vessels is related to a lower productivity rate for seabirds. Some of the seabirds using these islands for breeding include the California Brown Pelican (State Status: Endangered, 1971; Fully Protected; Federal Status: Endangered, 1970), Xantus's Murrelet (State Status: Species of Special Concern, Federal Status: none) and the Ashy-storm Petrel (State Status: Species of Special Concern, Federal Status: none). Residents of coastal communities have expressed displeasure at bright lights and noise from squid fishing vessels. The goal of the Squid Fishery Management Plan is to curtail rapid expansion of this fishery, ensure

sustainability of the resource and reduce the potential for overfishing. A copy of the Initial Study is not attached, but is available upon request.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after the receipt of this notice.

Please send your responses to this Notice of Preparation to: Ms. Annette Henry, at the address provided above. Your comments should include your name, address, and daytime telephone number so a representative of the Department can contact you if clarifications regarding your comments are required.

Project Title: California Market Squid Fishery Management Plan

Project Location: statewide marine waters

Project Applicant, if any: none

Date: 21 December 2001

Signature: (signed by John Duffy)

Title: Assistant Executive Director

Telephone: (916) 653-4899